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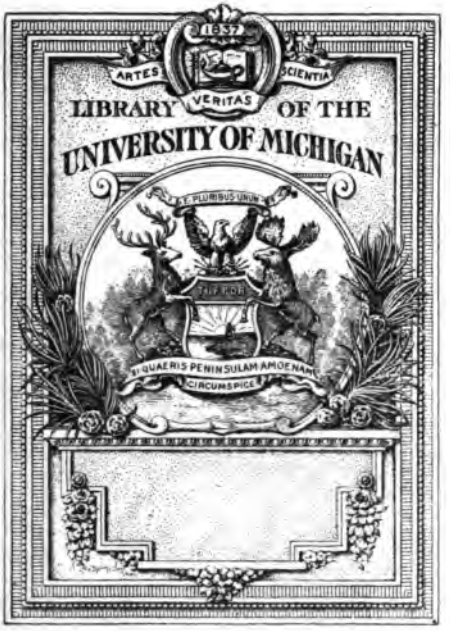
WHAT THE MOTHER OF A DEAF CHILD OUGHT TO KNOW

JOHN D. WRIGHT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WHAT THE MOTHER OF A DEAF CHILD OUGHT TO KNOW

What the Mother of a Deaf Child Ought to Know

BY

JOHN DUTTON WRIGHT

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TO MY WIFE

AT WHOSE SUGGESTION THIS LITTLE BOOK
WAS WRITTEN IN ORDER THAT MOTHERS
MAY DO ALL IN THEIR POWER FOR
THEIR DEAF CHILDREN

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PREFACE

THE mother of a little deaf child once wrote as follows:

"As a mother of a deaf child, and one whose experience has been unusual only in that it has been more fortunate than that of the average mother so situated, I want to place before you (the teachers of the deaf) a plea for the education of the parents of little deaf children.

"While you are laboring for the education of the deaf, and for their sakes are training teachers to carry on the work, there are, in almost every home that shelters a little deaf child, blunders being made that will retard his development and hinder your work for years to come—blunders that a little timely advice might prevent. We parents are not willfully ignorant, not always stupidly so; but that we

are in most cases densely so, there can be no doubt.

"Can you for the moment put yourselves into our place? Suppose you are just the ordinary American parents, perhaps living far from the center of things. You know in a hazy way that there are deaf and blind and other afflicted people—perhaps you have seen some of them.

"Now, into your home comes disease or a sudden awakening to the meaning of existing conditions, and you find that *your* child is *deaf*.

"At first your thought is of physicians; they fail you. Advice from friends and advertisements from quacks pour in upon you; still you find no comfort and no help.

"You stop talking to the child. What is the use? He cannot hear you! You pity him—oh, infinitely! And your pity takes the form of indulgence. You love him and you long to understand him; but you cannot interpret him and he feels the change, the helplessness

in your attitude toward him. You try one thing after another, floundering desperately in your effort to discover what radical step must be taken to meet this emergency. After a time you seize upon the idea that seems to you the best. Probably it is to wait until he is six or seven and then put him into an institution. But while you wait for school age to arrive, you lose that close touch with the soul of your child which may be established only in these early years, for you have no adequate means of communication with him—no way to win his confidence. Soon the child has passed this stage, and no school can ever give him what you might and would have given had you known how.

"You who are trained teachers of the deaf can hardly realize the need of advice about matters perfectly obvious to YOU; but the need exists. May I tell you from my own experience a few of the things about which you might advise—you, who know!

"In the first place, suggest to parents that

they make simple tests of their children's hearing; and tell them how and why those who are *partially* deaf should be helped.

"Then tell them to talk, and talk, and talk, to their little deaf ones—to say everything and say it naturally. And tell them some things in particular that should be said—commands, etc., and *certainly* 'I love you.' Tell them to speak in whole sentences. Give them an idea of the possibilities of lip-reading.

"Tell them that *by the expression of the face* they may convey to the deaf child the interest, approval, disapproval, etc., that they would express to a hearing child in the tone of voice.

"Tell them that there is *rarely* an untrained person who can *safely* meddle with articulation.

"Tell them that it is not true that all deaf children are bad; that the deaf must learn obedience as others do.

"Tell them the many things which you wish your pupils had learned before they entered school.

"Only this I beg of you—tell them!

"LUCILE M. MOORE."

For the sake of presenting the ideas contained in this little book in a somewhat systematic manner it was best to arrange them on the supposition that they would come to the notice of the mothers while their children were yet less than two years of age. In many cases, however, this will not be the case. When, therefore, the child is three, four, or five years old when this falls into the hands of the mother, it would still be well if she carried out the suggestions in the order in which they are here arranged. With the maturity of mind and body that comes with the added years, the child can pass through the earlier stages of the training much more rapidly than can be the case with the baby. Nevertheless, the preliminary steps should not be omitted. A child of four can be carried in six months through the exercises that occupied two years when begun with the child of twelve

months, but the older child should not be started with exercises suggested for the years after two.

Mothers of deaf children cannot be expected to be trained teachers of the deaf. It would be useless, and, in fact, often unfortunate, to ask them to attempt to teach articulation to their children. Even for them to teach the children to write would usually be undesirable because the greatest gain from the mother's efforts comes from the early establishment of the speech-reading habit and *entire* dependence upon it. It is a very great help to have this habit fixed before writing is taught. There is no haste about the child's learning to write. That is easily and quickly accomplished when the proper time comes. The difficult thing to do is, very fortunately, the thing the mother is best fitted to accomplish, namely, to create in the child the ability to interpret speech by means of the eye, and the habit of expecting to get ideas by watching the face of a speaker.

With these ideas in mind there has been

careful avoidance in this little book of any suggestion that the mother should be anxious about the speech development of the child before five years of age. If she has the patience and the time to follow the directions given, she will have done her child a very great service; the greatest that lies within her power; and she will have laid the foundation for a more rapid and better development of speech than would have been possible without her preliminary training.

Not every mother will find it possible to carry out all the suggestions offered in this little book, but no one should feel discouraged on that account. It seemed best to offer too many suggestions rather than too few, because these pages may fall into the hands of some mothers whose situation is such that full advantage can be taken of every idea here given. Presence of too much matter in the little book will not destroy its usefulness in cases where only a portion can be applied, whereas the lack of some of the ideas might

limit its value in certain instances. No one should give up in despair just because it is not possible to do all that is here suggested. Something, at least, can be found here which it is possible to do that will help very much.

Sometimes, through a false sense of shame, or through ignorance of the possibilities open to a deaf child, mothers have refused to admit that their children were deaf, or to allow anything to be done for them, until very valuable time has been lost. This is unfair to the child, and very wrong. A mother should have only pity for the deaf child and eagerness to aid him to overcome his handicap so far as possible. Delay in frankly facing the facts and in taking all possible measures to develop the remaining faculties will in the end only increase the mother's shame and add to it the pangs of remorse.

In a little book written to guide physicians in advising parents of deaf children, I said:

"The situation of a deaf child differs very much, from an educational standpoint, from

that of the little hearing child. Two hours a day playing educational games in a kindergarten is as much as is usually given, or is needful, for the little hearing child up to six or seven years of age; and his mental development and success in after life will not be seriously endangered if even that is omitted and he does not begin to go to school until he is eight or nine. The hearing child of eight who has never been in school and cannot read or write has, nevertheless, without conscious effort, mastered the two most important educational tasks in life. He has learned to speak and has acquired the greater part of his working vocabulary. In other words, although he has never been across the threshold of a school, his education is well advanced for his years and mental development.

"The situation of the uninstructed deaf child of eight is very different. The task which it has taken the hearing child eight years to accomplish, the deaf child of eight has not even begun. He cannot speak a word; he does not

even know that there is such a thing as a word. He is eight years behind his hearing brother, and even if he starts now, unless some means can be found for aiding him to overtake his brother educationally, he will be only eight years old in education when he is sixteen years of age. And when he is sixteen, the psychological period will have passed for acquiring what he should have learned when he was eight. The fact that the child is deaf does not exempt him from the inexorable laws of mental psychology and heredity. In the development of the human mind there is a certain period when all conditions are favorable for the acquisition of speech and language. Unnumbered generations of ancestors acquired speech and language at that stage of their mental development, and this little deaf descendant's mind obeys the law of inherited tendencies.

"If the speech and language-learning period, from two years of age to ten, is allowed to pass unimproved, the task of learning them later is rendered unnecessarily difficult.

"Therefore, in the case of the little deaf child, the years from two to ten are crucial, and of far greater importance than the same period in the case of the hearing child."

Even though the child be totally deaf from birth, he can nevertheless be taught to speak and to understand when others speak to him. He can be given the same education that he would be capable of mastering if he could hear. The mother need not be despairing nor heart-broken. A prompt, brave, and intelligent facing of the situation will result in making the child one to be proud of and to lean upon.

JOHN D. WRIGHT.

1 Mount Morris Park, West, New York City.
February, 1915.

WHAT THE MOTHER OF A DEAF CHILD OUGHT TO KNOW

(Mothers are strongly advised to read the Preface)

I

Facing the Facts

While deafness is a serious misfortune, it is neither a sin, nor a disgrace, to be ashamed of. It is a handicap, to be sure, but one to be bravely and cheerfully faced, for it does not destroy the chances for happiness and success. It is cause for neither discouragement nor despair. It will demand patient devotion and courageous effort to overcome the disadvantage, but what mother is not willing to show these in large measure for her child when the future holds assurance of comfort and usefulness?

The earlier that the facts are known and squarely faced, the better. It is always wiser

in life to prepare for the worst and gratefully accept the best, than to refuse to acknowledge the possibility of the worst until it is too late to remedy it, or at least to reduce it to its lowest terms.

When a mother first suspects that her child's hearing is not perfectly normal, what should she do? Of course, first of all, the best available ear specialist should be consulted at once in order to determine whether the cause can be removed and normal hearing restored. Sometimes, however, the specialists are uncertain of the outcome, and sometimes their hopes are not realized. In the meantime, precious days and weeks are passing in which something could be done for the little one educationally, without in any way interfering with the medical efforts at relief. The two things can be, and should be, carried on simultaneously. If normal hearing is restored no harm has been done by the educational training; in fact, the development of the child has been advanced. On the other hand, if the hopes that

were entertained are disappointed, then precious and irrecoverable time has not been lost.

The title presupposes that the mother has already accepted the fact that her child's hearing is not perfect, and, for the sake of the child, it is to be hoped that this knowledge came to her very promptly after the occurrence of the deafness.

One would naturally expect a mother, of her own accord, to carefully test all the senses of her child by many simple and repeated exercises during the first few months of its life. The many cases, however, in which deafness on the part of a child has not been recognized, or at least not acknowledged, by the mother till the third, fourth, or even fifth year, show a strange neglect of a highly desirable investigation, and a natural unwillingness to accept a truth, the possibility of which must certainly have occurred to her long before.

If she could only realize that she need not feel downcast and heavy-hearted by reason of her little one's imperfect hearing; if she could

only know that she need not look forward to a life for him different from that of other children; if she could understand that training and education can enable him to overcome to an extraordinary degree the disadvantage of deafness, she would set about the task with cheerfulness and hope, and if she knew that the sooner she began, the better it would be for the little one, she would not stubbornly refuse for so long to acknowledge even the possibility of deafness.

II

How Shall the Mother Begin Her Part of the Work?

First of all, something like an inventory should be taken of the faculties possessed by the child which he can use in working out his problem. Has he good sight, normal smell, taste, muscular sense, and memory? To what extent is his hearing impaired? Is there any possibility of restoring it to normal acuteness, or of improving it, or of preventing any further impairment?

The completeness with which these questions can be answered depends, to a considerable extent, on his age and his physical condition. We will suppose that he is about fifteen months old and in good bodily condition. If he is older, the same tests would be used to begin with, though we could at once pass on to more complicated and difficult ones that

cannot as yet be used with the fifteen-months-old baby.

First, with regard to sight. We wish to know if he can distinguish reasonably small objects at reasonable distances; whether he can see moderately small things at short distances; whether the angle of his vision is normal. In other words, whether his range and angle of vision are sufficient for all ordinary purposes.

If he can recognize his father or mother or brothers and sisters at a distance of a hundred feet he can see far enough for all practical purposes. If he readily finds a small object like a pin or a small black bead when dropped on the floor, his sight is sharp enough at short range to serve his purposes. If his attention can be attracted by waving a hand or a little flag or a flower fifty or sixty degrees on either side of the direction in which he is looking, that is, two-thirds of the way to the side of his head, his angle of vision is sufficiently wide. If he can pick out from seven balls of worsted

of the seven primary colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet—the ball that matches another of the same color, he is at least not color-blind and has a sufficient sense of color for the ordinary purposes of life. It may be necessary to wait till eighteen months for a satisfactory color test. Color blindness, when present, is usually most apparent in a failure to distinguish between red and green, these two widely differing colors seeming to produce the same impression upon the color-blind eye. The child will be just as likely to choose a red ball to match the green one in his hand as to select another red ball. But repeated tests should be made before accepting color blindness as a fact, since sometimes the brain can be educated to discriminate between red and green even when the impressions have not the normal degree of difference.

The tests for taste, smell, muscular sense, touch, and memory cannot be made with much thoroughness or satisfaction till two years of age, though observation will show a recognition

by taste and smell of that which is agreeable and that which is disagreeable. Accurate tests of hearing cannot be made till the child is three or four, but it is possible when he is twelve months old to determine whether the hearing is normal or is seriously impaired, and it is very desirable that this should be done.

The expression "seriously impaired," when applied to the hearing of a little child, must be given an entirely different interpretation than it would have if used with reference to an adult who had previously had normal hearing. A degree of impairment that would be unimportant in an adult is a very serious matter in the case of a child. This is because the ear is the natural teacher of speech and language. If the sounds of speech are not clearly heard the imitation of them will always be imperfect, and the acquisition of language will be impeded. If deafness is so great that spoken words are not heard at all, then the child will not learn to speak and to understand when spoken to unless specially taught. A much slighter de-

gree of deafness will prevent the proper acquisition of speech and language than would in later life prevent the comprehension of conversation in a familiar language. As even the child of fifteen months would benefit from some modifications of the ordinary treatment of a baby, if his hearing was not normally acute, it is to his advantage to have the fact of his deafness known at once by those in charge of him.

It is not as easy as it might seem to the inexperienced to determine even approximately the situation of a fifteen-months-old baby with respect to its hearing. Our interest here is, of course, in the tests of hearing that do not require special apparatus and special training. In the case of a child less than two years of age we must rely upon merely attracting his attention by various sounds, judging the effect upon him by his expression and actions. We cannot, at that age, establish a system of responses, nor expect him to imitate the sounds he hears. Sounds should be used for testing

that disturb only the air, and are not sufficiently low and powerful to set in vibration the floor, chair, or any other object with which he may be in contact. Deaf children rapidly become abnormally sensitive to vibrations, which are to them what noises are to us. A rather smooth, not too shrill, whistle is one excellent sound to use. Not a fluttering whistle like the postman's, nor a heavy tone like an organ pipe or bass horn. Clapping the hands is a good initial test of a crude nature; then a moderate whistle, varying the pitch, for sometimes high sounds are perceived, but not low ones, or vice versa. Then a bell, such as a small table bell, the telephone, electric door bell, etc. Lastly, the human voice in various pitches, volumes, distances, and vowels. Little by little it can be determined whether the child hears all the sounds, and if not, then which, if any, he perceives. A totally deaf child may often deceive the investigator by turning his head at the critical moment, apparently in response to the sound that was

made, while, on the other hand, a child very slightly deaf, or not deaf at all, may completely ignore the sounds made for the purpose of attracting his attention. Therefore, it takes time and repeated tests under varying environments to gradually eliminate possible errors and coincidences.

It must be remembered that the intensity with which a sound affects the ear varies inversely as the square of the distance from the ear to the source of the sound. That is to say, if exactly the same sound is repeated at half the distance, the intensity with which it reaches the ear is four times as great as before, and if the distance is quartered, the intensity is sixteen times as great. In other words, if "ah" is spoken with a certain loudness eight inches from the child's ear, and then again with exactly the same pitch and volume only two inches from his ear, it will be sixteen times as loud to him as it was the first time.

These simple tests will serve to determine whether the child has, or has not, a normal

acuteness of hearing. They will not serve to determine with any accuracy the degree of impairment, if it is found that the hearing is impaired at all. More thorough tests will have to be postponed till the child is two years old or more. But the moment that impaired hearing is suspected, the best available ear specialist should be consulted in order to determine whether the cause can be removed, or measures taken to prevent a progressive increase in deafness.

The visit to the otologist should be repeated at intervals of not more than eight or ten months, even where there is no question of treatment, in order that any change in the physical condition of the organs may be promptly detected.

III

How Shall the Mother Get into Communication with Her Deaf Child?

Let it be assumed that when the child is fifteen months old it is fairly well established that his hearing is somewhat below normal. Between fifteen months and two years of age all that is said in this section will apply equally to the child who is *feared* to be *totally* deaf and to one who is known to possess some sound perception, though not a normal degree of hearing. For, until he is old enough to respond to more complete and accurate tests, we must not give up the idea that he may have a sufficient remnant of hearing to be of great assistance to him in the acquisition of speech and language, if it is only developed and trained.

Between the ages of twelve months and twenty-four months the child with perfect hearing

makes rapid progress in learning to understand what is said to him, and by the time he is two years old has usually begun to speak many words and sentences in a more or less imperfect way. This has been accomplished principally by the mother's constant talking to her baby. If she has had the good sense to always speak in simple but complete sentences, and to avoid the foolish "baby talk" unfortunately affected by some people in addressing little children, the results of her daily and hourly talk is the possession by the child of a considerable vocabulary of words whose meaning he knows, and a less number that he is able himself to speak in a rather imperfect way.

In what respects should the mother modify her treatment of the baby if she suspects that his hearing is defective? She should not talk to him any the less on this account, but, on the contrary, she should talk to him more. She should, however, speak a little louder, a little nearer to him, possibly a little more slowly and distinctly, exercising the greatest

caution, however, not to exaggerate speech into unnatural facial contortions, or to accompany it by gestures. To fall into the habit of mouthing and gesticulating, making faces and motions, will defeat entirely the purpose of all efforts to develop an understanding of speech by the child. Unfortunately, such exaggerated and absurd speech is a natural and very prevalent fault. To avoid it is absolutely necessary, but requires constant watchfulness, as there is a strong temptation to try to make speech-reading easy for the child by opening the mouth wide and making extraordinary movements of the tongue.

The object aimed at is to lead the child to interpret natural, everyday speech, and such facial contortions and exaggerations cut him off from practice in reading natural speech. This point cannot be too strongly emphasized. Speak naturally and normally *always* to the deaf child.

Above all, the mother should form the habit of watching his eyes and of speaking as often

as possible when his gaze is fixed upon her face. The habit on his part of looking at the face of a speaker, and the habit on his mother's part of observing his gaze and, when it wanders, of pausing in her talk till he is looking at her again, are two very valuable aids in the language development of the deaf child. In addition to always raising her voice a little in speaking to her baby, the mother should several times a day take him in her lap and sing to him, and talk to him with her lips not far from his ear. Talk to him just as all mothers do to their babies (but not with the mangled and distorted words called "baby talk"), about the pussy, the dog, the bird, his foot, his toes, his arms and hands and fingers; about his papa, brothers, sisters; about the flowers, the grass, the trees, and a thousand other things. Say the good old Mother Goose rhymes of "Patty Cake, Patty Cake, Baker's Man," "This little pig went to market," etc., etc. But in all your frolics and stories and songs, take the greatest care that he shall hear

or see, or better still, *both* see *and* hear, what you are saying. Gradually he can be taught to understand many simple commands and questions just as hearing babies learn them, by constant repetition at times and under circumstances when the meaning is obvious. Such as "come," "go," "go to papa," "come to mamma," "jump," "stop," "kiss mother," "pet pussy," "pick up," "put down," "milk," "water," "bread" (the later in life that he learns the meaning and taste of "candy" the better), "do you want some bread?" "milk," "water," etc. "Bring my slippers," "bring my shoes," "put on your hat," "take off your mittens," "wash your hands," etc., etc., throughout the whole day.

Very early the mother should learn to consider the direction from which the light comes, and should be careful to take her position *facing* the main source of light which should come from *behind the child.* The eye can be trained from the very beginning of attention to unconsciously supplement an imperfect ear in com-

prehending spoken words. It is even possible for the eye to perform the entire task of interpreting speech, and, if the hearing is entirely lacking, the course outlined will result in training the brain to interpret the movements of speech as seen by the eye, as it would have been trained by the same procedure to interpret the sounds of speech had the organ of transmission not been injured. But the idea must be constantly in the mind of the mother that her boy needs to *see* the spoken word at the very moment *when the idea that it represents is in his mind,* AS OFTEN as he would hear it if his hearing were perfect.

This one suggestion, if faithfully lived up to from the age of one year to that of two years, would be almost enough. But there are other things that the mother can do as the mental development of the baby increases with each month of life. She should encourage him to babble and gurgle and murmur, as much as possible, to laugh and crow and make all the various baby noises that will train and develop

his voice. Encourage noisy, romping, rollicking games as he gets older, that make him shout and call, for they are the natural and best voice exercises.

IV

What About the Baby's Speech?

The hearing baby babbles because he gets some pleasure from the sounds, and also because he desires to imitate the sounds of speech he hears around him. *He has his attention called constantly to sound.* The sense of vibration is not as strong nor as instructive as that of sound, but if *the attention* of the child is early *called* to it, a watchfulness for vibration *from within himself* as well as from without, can be aroused, and a sensitiveness developed that would not have come as early, if at all, without special, directive effort on the part of the mother. She can lead her little one to oo-oo, and ee-ee, and mamma, and bub-bub, etc., by doing these babblings herself while the baby is in her arms and his tiny hands are wandering over her lips and face and throat. These exercises will gradually bring a recogni-

tion on the part of the child of the sensation of vibration that accompanies voice, and they will give facility, coupled with the normal and natural intonations that have been acquired when he was not conscious of any effort, that will prepare him for a better and more fluent speech when the time comes for more exact articulation training.

But during the first two or three years of the child's life the principal stress should be placed upon his learning to understand what is said to him, without bothering much about his speaking himself. In the case of the hearing child, the understanding of language comes before he can himself utter it. This must also be the case with the deaf child, and the period preceding utterance must be longer, by reason of his handicap, than in the case of a child with normal hearing.

V

Developing the Mental Faculties

By the time he is two years old he has gained maturity and grasp enough to play many little educational games with his mother and his little brothers and sisters, or playmates. These games should be calculated to develop his various faculties, his powers of observation, memory, and concentration. To develop a faculty is really *to train the brain.* As a matter of fact, we see and hear and taste and smell and feel with our brains. The eye of a two-year-old child is practically as perfect an optical instrument as the eye of a boy of ten, and yet how much more the older boy seems to see. This is because his brain has been trained to *interpret* the impressions that even the baby eyes received but did not understand. Of course, where the instrument is found to be imperfect we can assist it by means of addi-

tional lenses, or perhaps by some one of the skillful operations now performed by oculists, and, as the sight is of such increased importance to a deaf child, the greatest care and watchfulness should be given to his eyes. Do not let him sleep, or lie, facing the sun, or any other powerful light, but throughout his life be careful that all his use of eyesight be under conditions of ample and well-directed light. Supposing that the simple tests referred to heretofore have shown that the eyes, as optical instruments, are sufficiently perfect, our efforts need to be to train the brain to take cognizance of, and to interpret the impressions transmitted to it by the eyes. We shall not be able to improve the working of the eye by our efforts, but we can educate the brain.

Color and form make the earliest appeal to the child's eyes, and we can use them for our educational play. The duplicate set of worsted balls of the seven primal colors can be increased to include easily distinguishable shades. The child can be sent on entertaining

voyages of discovery around the room with a ball of a certain color to find other objects similar in color in the rugs, books, chairs, dresses, ties, etc.

A game to develop observation of form can be made by collecting a group of objects of varying shapes in a pile on the floor or a low table; mother picks up some one of the objects, directs the attention of the little one to it, and after he has observed it somewhat she puts it back in the pile and moves all the objects about till they are well mixed up. Ask the little fellow then to pick out the object mother held in her hand a moment before. When he can do this by sight without difficulty, have him shut his eyes, place an object in his little hands, teach him to feel it over carefully, take it from him, and, while his eyes are still closed, place it once more in the pile. Let him then open his eyes and see if he can indicate the object he had previously held. When he has mastered this, give the game another turn by asking him to find by means of

touch alone, while the eyes are still closed, the object that he has been feeling, after it is restored to the pile of other objects. Still another turn can be given by first letting him see the object, without touching it, then having him close his eyes, and by touch alone select it from the pile. A set of wooden forms, such as spheres, cubes, pyramids, cones, cylinders, and similar, but truncated, forms, can be obtained at any school supply store. To these can be added common household objects such as small frames, vases, napkin rings, spoons, forks, and other similar things, as well as some of the forms included in a complete set of the Montessori material.

The Montessori weighted forms are excellent for training his muscular recognition of difference of weight, and an excellent way is to put various quantities of birdshot into half a dozen exactly similar little rubber balls that can be purchased at any toy store for two cents apiece. Then hand the boy one of the weighted balls, and after he has felt its weight

put it back with the other similar-appearing balls and see if he can again discover it. An outfit for training his tactile sense can be made in any home by collecting duplicate pieces of cloth having different textures; such as velvet, rough woolen tweeds or homespun, silk, satin, cambric, muslin, etc., and pasting one set on cards. Also by stretching on a wooden frame, strings of varying sizes, weaves, and twists, and having a bunch of duplicates from which he can select, by sight and touch alone, the pieces that correspond, each to each, with those on the frame or on the cards. If there is a guitar, or mandolin, or zither, or a piano, available, perhaps, by and by, the mother can teach the child to recognize the difference in the vibratory sensation perceived by his fingers touching the body of the instrument when a low note and a high note are struck alternately. She can make a game of this, too, by later having him close his eyes and place his fingers in contact with the instrument and then tell her *approximately* what string or key she

struck. The next step, if she can take it, is to place his little hands upon her chest to feel the lowest notes of her voice, and upon both the chest and the top of her head to feel the highest, and endeavoring to get him to recognize the similarity in vibratory sensation between what he now feels and what he previously felt on the musical instruments. The last step in this series of exercises to awaken a recognition of vibratory sensations is to lead him to feel in his own chest and head the vibrations set up by his own voice in shouting and laughing, crying or babbling.

These hints that are so quickly and easily given, require weeks and months of patient, *happy* effort to carry out. Beware that no one of them is repeated or continued so long at a time as to become a thing dreaded and disliked. Remember that the attention of a little child is like a constantly flitting butterfly that rests for only a moment or two on anything before dancing away to something else.

There are many little games with kindergar-

ten materials that can be used to develop the powers of attention, observation, imitation, and obedience. The laying in simple designs, by watchful imitation of the mother, of colored sticks, colored squares, etc.; the building with colored blocks; stringing of *large* beads; weaving with *wide* strips of colored paper simple designs that a mother could invent with the material at hand or could learn from any kindergarten manual. The point that must be firmly, but *pleasantly,* insisted upon in these exercises is careful and obedient following by the child of the exact order of movement and manner of placing adopted by the mother teacher. The entire value of these exercises for the purpose she wishes to accomplish depends upon *accurate observation* by the child and *implicit obedience.*

The material outfit prepared and sold by the American exploiters of the Montessori method is admirably adapted to the development of the budding faculties of the child, and the mother who is trying to do all in her power to prepare

her little one to benefit to the greatest possible extent from the professional instruction that must come later, will make no mistake in supplying herself with the set of materials, and making herself intelligent on their use by the child.

VI

Developing the Lungs

The tendency of the deaf child is to grow up with less development of lungs and of the imagination than hearing children. In order to overcome this tendency the child must be encouraged and *taught* to play games and use toys that will exercise the lungs and develop the power of imaginative thought.

In order to expand and strengthen the lungs through the child's play, supply him with the brightly colored paper wind-mills that he can set whirling by blowing lustily; also the rubber balloon toys, even though the torturing squeak of the toys is only heard by those in the vicinity and not by himself. An especially good exercise for the gentle and long-continued control of breath results from the toy blow pipes with conical wire bowls by means of which light, celluloid balls of bright colors

are kept suspended in the air, dancing on the column of breath blown softly through the tube. The more steadily the child blows, the more mysteriously the ball remains at a fixed point, whirling rapidly but without any apparent support.

Blowing soap bubbles, especially trying to blow big ones, is very useful as well as interesting.

For physical development in which the lungs come in for their share and the sense of mechanical rhythm is fostered, an excellent exercise is marching in step to the stroke of the drum, proud in Boy Scout uniform. Dancing is a very desirable accomplishment for the deaf child.

Tops and tenpins cultivate dexterity, as do playing ball and rolling hoop.

VII

The Cultivation of Creative Imagination

This can be greatly helped by early use on the part of the child of colored modeling wax to reproduce objects and animals, and to construct models of imaginary houses, yards, trees, etc. A sand pile, or a large, shallow sand box, perhaps five feet square, with sides six inches high, and completely lined with enamel cloth to make it watertight, is a wonderful implement for constructive play on the part of the child. Whole villages of farms, fields, and forests, ponds and brooks, roads and railroads, can be made here in miniature.

Building blocks of wood or stone; the metal construction toy called "Mechano"; dolls, doll houses, furniture, and equipment, are valuable, but they should be simple, inexpensive and not fragile.

Cut-up picture puzzles, painting books, trac-

ing slates with large and simple designs cultivate observation and ingenuity. Kaleidoscopes and stereoscopes are excellent, but moving pictures are so trying upon the eyes, and the air of the theaters is so bad, that a deaf child whose eyes are his only salvation, and whose health is doubly important, should not even know of their existence till he is seven or eight years old.

VIII

Further Tests of Hearing

But, as soon as the mother finds her little child sufficiently mature to benefit by the sense training described above, whether it be at twenty or, as is more likely, at from twenty-four to thirty months, she can begin to make a more complete and accurate determination of the degree of his deafness, for now she can establish a system of responses on the part of the child that will show her when he perceives the sounds she uses in her tests.

In order to be certain that the little one knows what she wishes of him, she must begin with some sensation that she is sure he feels. We will assume that he has as yet no speech, and cannot count, at least does not know the names of the numbers. Let the mother pat him once on the shoulder and then cause him

to hold up one of his little fingers. Then pat him twice, and make him hold up two fingers, then three times and have him put up three fingers. Now return to one pat and one finger, repeat two pats and the holding up of two of his fingers, and three pats and three fingers. Go over and over this little game until he has grasped the idea and will hold up as many fingers as he feels pats. Simple as the idea seems, it will often take a bright child some time to realize what you want him to do. But you are *sure* that he feels the pats, whereas, if you began at once with sounds, you could not know whether his failure to respond was because he did not hear, or through not understanding what you expected of him. He will weary of the exercise soon, and then mother may as well turn to something else till he has rested.

Having established this system of response on his part to sensations perceived, it is not difficult to shift from the number of pats to the number of times he hears a noise. This

once accomplished, tests can be made with sounds of different kinds, different pitch, and different volume, varying the distance, the instruments, and the vowel when the articulate sounds are reached. He can be shown a whistle, then, when it is blown behind his back, he will hold up as many fingers as the times it was blown, if he perceives the sound. He can be asked to distinguish between a whistle, a little bell, and the clapping of the hands. When he is successful in that, the vowel sounds may be uttered not far from his ear, but behind him. Begin with "ah" (ä), as this is the most open and strongest; then try "oh" (ō), which is not easily confused with ä. Then ee (ē). If, after a time, a distance and a degree of loudness are found that enable him to recognize these sounds with unfailing accuracy, or at least 90 per cent. of the time, then other sounds can be added, such as aw (a̤), ă (as in hat), ī (as in ice), oo (as in cool), ow (as in owl). Using these sounds at different pitches, and with different intensities and distances, a

sufficiently accurate estimate can be formed of the degree of his hearing power so far as his present needs are concerned.

IX

The Development of Residual Hearing

If any ability to perceive sounds is found, every effort should be made to lead the child to use it, and as the most essential use of hearing is in the comprehension of spoken language, the principal effort should be made along that line.

Take three objects, the names of which are short, with the principal vowels quite easily distinguished. A little toy street car, a cap, and a toy sheep, would do nicely to begin with, as the three words, "car," "cap," and "sheep," are not easily confused. Place two of the objects before him, the car and the sheep, and speak the name of one of them, "car," we will say, loudly and distinctly close to his ear, but in such a way that he cannot see your mouth. Then show him the car. Repeat it with "sheep" and show him the sheep. Repeat

"car," and take his little hand, put it on the car. Then "sheep," and make him put his hand on the sheep. Continue this process until he will indicate to you the object you name. When he makes only occasional mistakes with two objects, add the cap. When he can get the right one about 90 per cent. of the time, then take three new words, returning occasionally to the first three. Very soon his own name and those of others, with photographs to enable him to indicate which, will prove of interest to him. When he has successfully learned to distinguish a few single words, a beginning can be made on short sentences. Commands that he can execute are convenient. "Shut your eyes," "Open your mouth," "Clap your hands," can follow drill on the three words, "eyes," "mouth," "hands." "Open the window," "Shut the window," "Open the book," "Shut the book," "Open the door," etc. "Stand up," "Sit down." When this beginning has been made, the road is open to the gradual increase in a hearing vocabulary, but

do not attempt so much at once as to confuse and discourage the child.

The suggestions already made should be studiously followed throughout his whole childhood. If his hearing is not too seriously impaired, he will begin to attempt to imitate spoken sounds by the time he is twenty-four to thirty months old. But his ability to imitate sounds is not an accurate measure of his ability to hear. He may perceive the sounds much better than he is able to reproduce them. Distinct utterance comes slowly to the child with normal hearing, and still more slowly and imperfectly to the child whose hearing is not good. But the continued effort to make him hear *words and sentences* is a very valuable exercise for him and should be faithfully continued till he is old enough to respond to the tests of hearing as outlined and it has been definitely proved that he cannot possibly tell whether ä, or ō, or ē is said, no matter how loud or how near the ear the sound is uttered.

The question will naturally arise as to

whether the child's hearing of speech can be aided by an electric or mechanical device. When it is possible to make the child perceive the sound of the vowels with the unaided voice uttered very near the ear, I believe it to be better, at first, not to interpose any artificial device. But I have found that sometimes, in cases where the sound perception was not at first sufficient to enable the child to distinguish even the most dissimilar vowel sounds, although uttered loudly close to the ear, I could awaken the attention of the child to sound, and stimulate the dormant power by the use of an Acousticon. After a few months I have been able to dispense with the instrument and use only the unaided voice at close range. Later, when some vocabulary has been acquired through these auricular exercises, it is often desirable to return to the Acousticon and teach the child to use it, in *order to extend the distance at which sounds can be heard.* By the use of the Acousticon, it then becomes possible to communicate by means of the ear without

speaking at such short range. It is not easy, however, to induce a child to use an Acousticon at all times, whereas an adult will take the time and trouble necessary to become accustomed to the instrument, and will put up with the slight inconveniences inseparable from its use.

X

Developing the Power of Lip Reading

In this effort to develop the hearing, however, the necessity must not be forgotten of also training the brain to associate ideas with what the eye sees on the lips when words are spoken. In the case of the very slightly deaf child, this visual training is not quite so important as the auricular training, but when there is much deafness it is the more important of the two. The comprehension of much language can be given to the little deaf child by constantly talking just as any mother does to her hearing baby, only being always careful to take a position facing the main source of light, which should come *from behind the child.*

The hearing child arrives at the association of meaning with the sounds of words only after very many repetitions. How often must the child hear "Mamma," "Look at mamma," "See,

here is mamma," "Mamma is coming," "Mamma is here," "Where is mamma?" "Do you love mamma?" "Mamma loves baby," etc., etc., from morning to night, day after day, week after week. The mother does it for pleasure; to play with and pet the dear baby. She does not think of it as a teaching exercise, but it is a very important one. The deaf baby will learn gradually to associate a meaning with the various sequences of movement of the lips, if a little care is taken to watch his eyes and to speak when they are directed toward the speaker, and to stand in such relation to the light that it falls upon the speaker's face. The speech should be the same as to the hearing child, but it takes a little more care and watchfulness to have the deaf child *see* the same word or phrase *as many times* as the hearing child hears it. If it is spoken when the baby is not looking, it does not help.

When the little one is learning to walk, the mother says, "Come to mamma," "Go to daddy," and gradually he learns "come" and "go."

She has him play hide and seek with another child, and she says, "Where is Tom?" "Where is the baby's mouth?" "Where is the baby's nose?" etc., and by and by he knows "where" and "mouth" and "nose," and the names of his playmates or brothers and sisters. When he is sitting on the floor she picks him up, saying "up." When she puts him from her lap to the floor she says "down." If he is naughty she says "naughty," and perhaps spats his little hands, and so on through the day. A little care on her part, a little added thought and watchfulness, perhaps a few more repetitions, and little by little she will find her deaf baby learning to look at her always, and to understand much that is said to him. She must all this time remember, also, that the shades of feeling, pleasure, disappointment, approval, disapproval, doubt, certainty, love, anger, joy, which are largely conveyed to the hearing child by intonation of voice, must be conveyed to the deaf baby by facial expression and manner. They become very keen at interpreting moods

by the look. Let the face be sunny and kind and INTERESTED, if possible. The first indication of impatience, of being bored and weary, will destroy much of one's influence with the deaf child.

Sometimes it is harder to disguise one's feelings in the face than in the voice. Do not be caught unawares. Interest, cheerfulness, and patience are tremendous forces to help the little deaf child.

Some one has said:

"When you consent, consent cordially;
When you refuse, refuse finally;
When you punish, punish good-naturedly."

XI

Forming Character

And now that the little one is two or three years old, it may be well to say a few words about his general training in character and habits. There is a strong, and a not unnatural tendency to maintain an attitude toward the deaf child that differs from that maintained by sensible mothers toward their other children. They often set up a different standard of conduct and of obligation for the afflicted child. His brothers and sisters are taught to always defer to his wishes; even to the extent of yielding to improper and selfish demands on his part, and conceding that they have no rights where he is concerned. He is not required to perform the little duties demanded of the other children. He is given privileges which the others do not, and which no one of them, including himself, should enjoy. He grows tyrannical,

domineering, and selfish. The mother says: "Poor little chap; he has trouble enough, we must do all in our power to make up to him for what he misses by reason of his deafness." This is, however, a shortsighted, and really a cruel policy. It lays up much misery for his future, and in the end proves a serious handicap to one who needs to have as few additional difficulties as possible. Though it may seem hard-hearted, it is really kinder to put him on the same basis as any other child. Make him do everything possible for himself. Insist upon his being independent; dressing himself as soon as he is able, buttoning his own shoes, and performing all the little self-help acts that the wise mother demands of all her children. Make no distinction in the treatment accorded him. Ask the same services, reward right actions and punish wrongdoing as impartially as if he was not deaf, only being sure that he clearly connects the punishment with the wrong act. This, in the case of a deaf child, requires a little more care than with a

hearing child. Train him to be thoughtful for the comfort of others, and respectful of their rights, just as you insist that the others observe his rights. He cannot be argued with, object lessons and example must be the means of teaching him manners and morals.

XII

Cultivating the Social Instinct

Between the ages of two and four years all the games and exercises heretofore described can continue to be used, together with others increasingly difficult and complicated, as the child's mind develops and his powers of observation, attention, and memory increase. Take very special care that he learns all the childhood games that other children know and enjoy. Devote yourself more to him in this respect than you would in the case of another child. Encourage the neighbors' children to come and play with him by making it especially pleasant for them. Teach them yourself to play "Hide the Thimble, "Hide and Seek," "Drop the Handkerchief," "Going to Jerusalem," "Old Maid," "Bean Bag." Follow the Leader is an excellent game by which to teach watchfulness and imitation. Cat and Mouse,

Hot Potato, Ring on a String, are all games that can be played by groups and cultivate quickness. Ping Pong Football is excellent as a lung developer. That is the choosing of sides and trying to blow a ping pong ball between the goal posts formed by a pair of salt shakers at opposite ends of a table. Or blowing a feather across a sheet by opposing sides. Encourage good, romping, noisy games in which the children naturally laugh and shout. They are the best of voice-developing exercises, and by such means, and his long-distance shouting and calling to his playmates, the little hearing child gains much of his lung and voice power. In all his games, as in all his other activities, take very *special* pains to talk to him, using the regulation expressions and training him to watch for the "It's your turn," or "Now, Tom," "Ready," "Whose turn is it?" etc., etc.

If the foregoing suggestions have been carefully carried out since he was twelve months old, he will long ago have arrived unconsciously at the knowledge that all things, and all ac-

tions, and all feelings, have names, and that the mouth always makes the same sequence of movements for the same thing. In the babbling exercises recommended, he will gradually come to utter many of the vowel and consonant sounds of his native language; especially those that are made by the lips and by evident positions of the tongue. Those sounds that require hidden positions of the organs, such as the sound of C and K in cat and ark, or G in go and dog, or ng in long, he is unlikely to have stumbled upon. These can be taught when the proper time comes, but their absence for the present need cause no anxiety. In fact, up to the time when he is three and a half or four years old, the matter of speaking is not one to be much troubled about. If the conception of language has been given him through lip-reading, and some ability to understand the necessary language of his daily life, his future success is assured.

XIII

Something About Schools and Methods

Till the child is at least four years old, the proper place for him is at home, and if he must be sent to one of the large public schools for the deaf it should not be till he is five or even six years of age.

But during these years the mother can gain much knowledge that will help her by visiting as many schools for the deaf as possible. There are about a hundred and fifty such schools in the United States and eight in Canada. They vary in size, in character, and in methods of instruction employed. There are public boarding schools, and public day schools, free to the resident of the state, or city, in which they are located. There are private boarding and day schools, maintained by charity, or by the tuition fees. Some of each class are oral schools; that is, they employ only speech methods of

instruction, without any signs or finger spelling. Others are called "Combined" schools; that is, they permit, and in some exercises encourage, the use of finger spelling and gestural signs, while they also give some instruction by the speech method. There are sectarian and non-sectarian schools, both oral and combined.

A very considerable number of schools for the deaf in the United States and Canada still use manual, or silent, methods of instruction, at least in part. But the speech, or oral, method is steadily growing in popularity, and gradually supplanting manual spelling and gestural signs. The time will certainly come when the public will be too intelligent to any longer tolerate the use between teacher and pupil, or between any employee and the pupils, in a school for the deaf, any system of manual communication.

Every deaf child, no matter if born totally deaf and of a low order of intelligence, can be given as much education by the exclusive use of the speech method as it can by any manual,

or silent, method or by a combination of the speech and the silent method. This is not the mere expression of an opinion, but the statement of a fact; a fact firmly established by actual results in state institutions where, unfortunately, the law requires the admission of pupils too poorly equipped intellectually to belong in a school with normally bright children. In addition to acquiring all the education of which his mental endowment makes him capable, he can be taught to speak and to understand when spoken to. The degree of perfection attainable depends upon the ability of the child, the skill of the teaching, and especially upon *the environment* in which the child passes its formative educational years. The probability of the child's acquiring a maximum proficiency in speaking and in understanding others when they speak, is lessened in direct proportion to the extent to which he is permitted to use the silent or manual means of communication. In the so-called "combined" schools, the *environment* is largely manual. A

visit to the playgrounds, the baseball fields, the shops, dining rooms, and dormitories of "combined" schools will disclose the pupils using silent means of communication, not only between themselves, *but with those in charge of them. They do not think in spoken forms, but in finger spelling and signs.* The powerful influence of environment in those schools is *against* the acquisition of the speech and lip-reading habit.

The mother who has faithfully followed the suggestions offered in the foregoing pages will be able to appreciate what she sees on visiting the schools, and will gain much more from such visits than one who is entirely inexperienced in the problem. Every mother should make it her business to visit at least one *purely oral* school, in order that she may make herself thoroughly intelligent on what may be expected of a deaf child.

Unfortunately, pure oral schools are not as plentiful as "combined" schools, but it will well repay any parent to make a journey, even

across the continent, if necessary, in order to study the workings of some good, purely oral, school. Do not be satisfied with a visit to the nearest "combined" school.

You owe it to your child to make yourself thoroughly intelligent as to the *possibilities* open to a deaf child. You will not be intelligent till you have personally visited some good *purely oral* school.

The number, character, location, etc., of the schools are constantly changing. A descriptive list of all schools corrected to date will be gladly supplied by the author to any one requesting it.

XIV

The Preservation of Speech

WHEN DEAFNESS RESULTS FROM ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS AFTER INFANCY

Up to this point it has been assumed that deafness occurred before the age of two years, and before the child had begun to speak. In cases where, through accident or illness, impairment of hearing has come after the child has begun to talk, the mother should bend all her efforts upon keeping the speech of her child. The younger the child, the more difficult is the task. Without the greatest vigilance and increasing attention, the speech of a little child who has become deaf will fade rapidly away, until it is lost entirely, and must be artificially recreated when he is old enough to grasp the complicated ideas involved in speech teaching to the deaf. But by persistently encouraging him

to talk, and never, even for a day, allowing him to lapse into silence, and *by not accepting careless and faulty utterance, but pretending not to understand till the child speaks distinctly and correctly,* the natural speech, which was his before deafness occurred, can be preserved, and the speech habit thoroughly fixed. If, by good luck, the little one has learned to read even a simple primer before becoming deaf, it will be much easier to prevent a loss of speech. For this reading can be made an excuse for frequently using his speech. But when the child cannot read, the mother must depend entirely upon inducing him to talk to her, refusing to give him anything, or grant his request, till he asks for it in good spoken form; showing him pictures, playing games, frolicking with him; doing everything that a mother's love and ingenuity can suggest, to keep him talking all day long.

The tendency of the child will be to drop, or slur, the final syllables of the words; to leave off the sound of final *ed;* to lose the sharpness

of the *s;* to blur the *l;* and sometimes to lose the sound of *k* and *c.* But, if he has learned to read, by pointing to these letters in the words he has spoken imperfectly, he will correct his own mistake. Prompt and increasing attention to the little fellow's speech during the first year after deafness occurs will usually serve to fix correct habits for life.

XV

Teaching Lip Reading

All that has been said about training the little deaf child to read the lip movements and associate them with the names of things and of actions, will apply also to the little boy who has suddenly been made deaf, after speech has been learned. Be careful that he is looking at you always when you speak to him or reply to some question he has asked, but speak just as you would have done before he became deaf. You may have to repeat things to him very often at first, but do not permit any sign of impatience in your face. Do not let him get the idea that it is a hardship to talk to him. Remember that you are changing his manner of understanding speech over to another way, and that his present and future happiness depends very greatly on the thoroughness and promptness with which it is done. In all deal-

ings with a deaf child the mother should remember that the child draws his impressions of the character and the feelings of those about him from the expression of their faces, and many almost unconscious little acts and gestures. Avoid very carefully any appearance of being impatient, or bored, or contemptuous at his failures. Try to understand the difficulties under which he is working to maintain his place in the world. Do not humor his whims, or spoil him by indulgence, yet treat him with the greatest consideration and fairness. Above all, be cheerful and, at least apparently, interested in his doings and sayings.

XVI

School Age

The question of what is "school age" for a deaf child is answered very differently by different people. Most of the state institutions for the deaf in the United States, Canada, and Europe will not admit children younger than six years of age. Seven years is still the age of admission in some institutions, but the tendency is to lower the age limit. In some schools children of five are admitted, in a few those as young as four, and in two or three small schools babies of two and three are received. Any statement here must, therefore, be taken as only the expression of the author's opinion, resulting from more than twenty-five years of active teaching, combined with wide observation.

It would appear that, where home conditions are not bad, either physically or morally, the

proper place for the little deaf child till he is nearly, or quite, five, is with his mother. Very much can be done for the little one before he is five to prepare him for the instruction which should be given at that age, but it is possible for the mother to do what is necessary, and even the simplest home conditions are preferable for very little children to the institutional environment. It is impossible, in a school of from one hundred to five hundred pupils, to create a real home environment, such as the very little child should have. It is really a pity that the child of five should have to be placed in the institutional environment as it at present exists. If the legislative bodies of our states, and the gentlemen who manage the schools, could only be induced to adopt the cottage plan of housing in small units, the disadvantages of institutional life would be enormously reduced.

XVII

Organized Efforts by Parents to Obtain Better Educational Conditions

It should be possible for every taxpayer in every state who has a deaf child and who has not the means or the wish to place that child in a private school, to have the child educated in a free public school as completely by the speech method as his hearing children are educated by that method. He should not be compelled to send his child out of the state or else subject him to the influence of signs and finger spelling, with the probability that he will leave school a deaf mute. Unfortunately, in many states, this is not possible at present. But if the parents of deaf children would organize themselves into "Parents' Associations" and send representatives to the governors and legislative committees; and arrange for demonstrations by orally educated deaf children from

pure oral schools; and carry on an active campaign of enlightenment and of agitation, the present state of affairs would soon cease to exist.

I wish to make an urgent plea for the energetic efforts of all parents of deaf children to improve the speech-teaching conditions in their respective localities. At present, very far from all that is possible is being done to give deaf children a ready command of spoken English, and a working ability to understand when spoken to. The persons who have the most at stake in this matter, and who should be most active and persistent in demanding from the school authorities and legislatures better facilities for the acquisition of speech by deaf children, are the parents of those children. In each locality these parents should organize into "Parents' Associations." These local associations should, in turn, be connected by a state-wide organization composed of representatives from each local association. These state organizations could then be combined by repre-

sentation in a national organization of all the parents of deaf children in the United States. Such complete organization once effected, the reasonable demands made in the interests of better results in speech teaching would quickly be complied with by the respective schools and the legislatures or boards of directors that control them. The associations could induce their local papers to aid in a campaign to educate public opinion by printing facts concerning what is done elsewhere. If all parents of deaf children only knew what might be accomplished, and were so organized as to permit them to present their wishes forcibly to those able to change conditions, the deaf child would quickly come into his own.

XVIII

A Personal Matter for Each Parent

Let some parent in each locality make it his or her business to get the names and addresses of all other parents of deaf children in the vicinity. Induce them to come together some evening and choose a chairman and an executive committee of three. Let these four people make a point of studying the education of the deaf as conducted in the most advanced communities. Let the executive committees of the several local associations get together once or twice a year for a sort of state convention of parents. Let them invite leading educators to address them, and let them appoint committees to visit schools in other states where different methods are employed. If such a movement was once started there would be found plenty of subject-matter for discussion, and plenty of opportunities to work for a better-

ment of conditions. The author of this little book would be glad to give any aid in his power to such a movement, and to place the results of his twenty-five years of experience at the disposal of any parent, or parents' organization.

The first efforts should be directed to inducing, or compelling, the so-called "Combined Schools" for the deaf throughout the United States to wholly segregate at least a small oral department from the manually taught pupils. The orally taught pupils should never come in contact during their school life, either in the shops, dining rooms, playgrounds, or schoolrooms, with those pupils with whom finger spelling and signs are employed. All employees, whether superintendents, teachers, supervisors, teachers of trades, or servants, who have to do with the orally taught pupils should be *compelled* to use only speech and lip reading (and writing, if absolutely necessary) under penalty of dismissal for failing to do so. Only by means of such segregation, and the en-

forcement of speech as a universal medium of communication, can the appropriations for oral work be made really productive of good results in what are now called "Combined Schools." This can be done on a small scale at the beginning, with the little entering beginners. Then if all beginners are put into this oral department it will gradually grow at the expense of the manual department, until, after a period of eight or ten years, the entire school will have become oral.

This is the only method of procedure by which satisfactory results in speech teaching for practical purposes can be obtained in return for the generous appropriations that the states make. It has been fully demonstrated by actual operation in the state of Pennsylvania, where the largest school for the deaf in the world has in this manner been changed from a "Combined School" to a pure oral school.

All the deaf children in the State of Massachusetts are now taught wholly by the oral

method. If that polyglot and heterogeneous population can be so treated, there is no state in the Union where the same could not be done if there were the desire and the ambition to do it.

In many states deaf children have been, either by definite statement, or by tacit understanding, exempted from the enforcement of the compulsory education law. This is all wrong. They need the protection of that excellent law even more than the hearing child, and if the law for compulsory education does not, in fact, apply to them, it should at once be amended to do so.

XIX

Day Schools

The parents are the ones most interested in this matter, and it is through their efforts alone that improvement can be brought about. In Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Missouri, and California, free public oral day schools have been established. This movement has reached its highest development in Wisconsin and Michigan. In Wisconsin there are twenty-four such schools scattered throughout the state, and in Michigan fourteen. New schools are opened by the Board of Education under prescribed conditions upon the request of a certain number of parents of deaf children. Such a law should be on the statute books of every state, and will be when the parents of deaf children organize and demand it.

XX

The Deaf Child at Five Years of Age

When the little child that has been deaf from infancy is five years of age, he should be placed in a *purely oral school* for the deaf, if such a thing is possible.

The child who has become deaf by illness or accident after speech has been acquired, should be placed under experienced instruction by the speech method *at once.*

To quote once more from my little book of suggestions to physicians:

"If the proper school for the little hearing child of five did not happen to exist in his immediate neighborhood, no one would think of insisting upon the necessity of sending the little one away to a distant boarding school. But that is what must be done in the case of the little deaf child, if precious and irrecoverable years are not to be lost. It is often a difficult

matter to persuade a mother to sacrifice her own personal happiness and comfort in having the little child with her, and to look far enough into the future to see that a true and unselfish love for the child requires her to entrust him to the care of others during those early and crucial years."

XXI

Schools for the Hearing and Private Governesses

If no oral day or boarding school is available near at hand, the mother should have the far-sighted love that is unselfish, and the courage to part with her little five-year-old child during the months of the school year, and place him in some one of the distant schools where he can live and be taught in a purely oral environment. There are two alternatives to this, each of which is sometimes attempted, but both are undesirable. First the mother not infrequently attempts to have her child educated in the schools for hearing children. This is very unsatisfactory and even dangerous, for if persisted in it results in wholly inadequate progress, uneven development, bad speech, irretrievable loss of time, and often in a com-

plete nervous breakdown. This may not come for some years, but the nervous system, once undermined by the excessive strain of trying to keep up under impossible conditions, can never be fully repaired. Here is what a *partially* deaf woman writes of her experience as a child:

"When I was three and one-half years old scarlet fever left me almost totally deaf. My father was a physician. He was urged to send me to a school for the deaf, but his medical training told him that what was needed was association with speaking children, if I were to retain my speech, for at that time the oral method was unknown in our state. So I went to school with hearing children. Unless you have been deaf, you will not understand the misery in this statement. A little, lonely deaf child, I went to a public school, hearing practically nothing of the teachers' instructions or the pupils' recitations. Of the torture of that deaf childhood I will not speak. You all know how cruel children may be, and a deaf child

among hearing children often suffers untold torments."

The second alternative is to seek some person who will teach the child in his own home. This, too, is very unsatisfactory, and involves loss of time and opportunity that can never be recovered.

In the first place, the beginning years of a deaf child's educational life are the most important of all. They are crucial. It is then he requires the highest skill, the greatest experience, and the most perfect conditions. The best teachers can seldom, if ever, be induced to teach a single child in its home. Usually these teachers are more or less inferior. But even the best teacher in the world cannot do for a little deaf child in his home what she could accomplish for him in a well-organized and properly conducted school.

Neither the intellect nor the character of the deaf child can be as successfully developed, after five years of age, by a private teacher in his home as in a good school.

The following elements are essential for the highest educational welfare of a deaf child:

First. The stimulus and incentive of association and competitive companionship.

Second. The contact with more than one mind and more than one speaker.

Third. The avoidance of becoming dependent upon some one as an interpreter, and the cultivation of independence and self-reliance through constant practice with various teachers.

Fourth. A fully equipped and trained organization, providing a complete and uninterrupted education under one head.

Fifth. Regularity of life, and the subordination of all living conditions to the highest educational advantage (a thing utterly incompatible with home conditions).

These most necessary conditions are not possible of attainment through private instruction in the home. The child who is kept at home and given private instruction too often grows up to be timid, self-distrustful, and unfitted to

cope with the difficulties and oppositions of the world. He falls an easy prey to temptation and is quickly discouraged by obstacles. Very often he is selfish, narrow, and overbearing. Not having those about him of his own age and with the same desires, he has become accustomed to having people yield to his whims and fancies as child playmates would not yield. He is more or less excluded from the plays and pleasures of childhood. All those about him have an advantage over him.

On the other hand, the tendencies of the school-bred child are to be simple, natural, and childlike. His inclination to moodiness and suspiciousness is much less. He is happier. He becomes self-reliant, independent, and respectful of the rights of others. He is less petulant and more obedient. The wisest parents do not educate their hearing children at home, nor should they attempt it with a deaf child.

XXII

Importance of the Beginning

I wish to lay very special stress upon the necessity *at the beginning* of the most expert and experienced instruction that is attainable. If circumstances make it impossible to give to the child the best *all* the time, then he should have the best at the start rather than later. Every effort and every sacrifice that are ever going to be made for the child's sake should be at the beginning of his school training, and not delayed till he is older. The years from five to eight or ten will determine his future success. If he has poor teaching during these early years, even the best teaching later will not be able to make up the loss entirely. But if he has good teaching during the first few years, then less expert teaching later cannot do

him as much harm as it otherwise would. The early years are his most crucial period, and the best efforts should be expended then instead of when he is twelve or fourteen.

XXIII

Avoid the Young and Inexperienced Teacher

Between the ages of five and ten avoid the young and inexperienced teacher and the amateur as you would the plague. Unfortunately, the idea is prevalent that *any one* can teach a little child, but that it takes experience to teach the older pupils. This is a disastrous fallacy. Young and inexperienced women are too often quite ready to assume the great responsibility of teaching a little deaf child. They rush in where angels might well fear to tread. Unfortunately, parents, and even school superintendents, are often too ready to permit them to do this dangerous thing.

XXIV

On Entering School

Through the courtesy of the *Volta Review,* in which her article appeared, and of the author, Miss Eleanor B. Worcester, a teacher of the deaf for many years, and at one time the principal of a school, I am able to include the following very sensible and valuable advice for the guidance of mothers when their children enter school.

The First Year at School

BY ELEANOR B. WORCESTER

At last the time has come when you feel that it is best for your boy to study with other children. And since your own town does not offer

him a suitable opportunity, it is necessary to send the little fellow to one of the well-known boarding schools, where trained and wise men and women are devoting their thought and energy to giving every advantage of education, comfort, and happiness to the little people under their care.

You have already decided, after much thought and the writing of many letters—perhaps after a visit to the school you incline to most—just where it is best that the child shall go.

You have studied carefully all the directions about clothing given in the school catalogue, and have made sure that every little blouse or stocking has its owner's name written or sewed fast on it, and that all the small garments are in perfect order and ready for use.

But have you thought how your own attitude toward this change in your boy's life is unconsciously preparing him either to rebel against and fear school, or to look forward to

going there as one of the most delightful and interesting events of his life?

I know that it is impossible for you to avoid dreading the day when your child must go among strangers, but I beg you not to let him see what your feeling is. It will take all your resolution and all your courage to wear not only a cheerful face, but a happy one; but you must make your boy feel that a very delightful time is coming.

If you go about the necessary preparations as you might if he were going to the show or on a visit, he will enter into the spirit of things with enthusiasm; but if you once let him find you crying over his packing he will immediately jump to the conclusion that some dreadful thing is in prospect, and will be entirely prepared to be frightened at being left at school, and to break your heart by clinging to you and begging to go home again. And, more than this, he will be far more likely to be homesick.

So, since you know it is best for him to be in school, and that it is the only possible road

to happiness and usefulness, why not lead him to anticipate the going; to look forward to it as a treat, and to feel that to be a schoolboy is really the great end of existence?

One of the first steps in this direction will be to help him understand a little what kind of a place he is bound for.

Very likely the school you have decided on publishes an illustrated catalogue, and weeks before school opens begin to show him the pictures of the school buildings and grounds, and make him understand that on a certain day in September, which you mark on the calendar with bright crayon, you and he will go there. Let him see one of the little white beds where he will sleep after you return home, the sunny dining room where he will eat his morning porridge and his Sunday ice cream; the playground full of rollicksome youngsters, with whom he will seesaw and play tag by and by, and the busy schoolroom, where so many delightful and interesting things are sure to happen.

Talk about all these things often and brightly

and you will find that school has become a most desirable and fascinating place, and that every night there will be a great satisfaction in climbing on a chair to scratch off from the calendar another day done before the joy of going there.

Then you can buy such delightful things to be put into that waiting trunk—things often to be looked at, but never to be used till that wonderful place is reached—long red and blue pencils, with rubbers on the ends; boxes of writing paper, all gay with pictures and exactly right for the first letters home; a foot rule, and, if you are a truly brave mother, a real jack-knife to sharpen the same red and blue pencils and add to the joy of living.

It is absorbing work, too, to mark them all with one's name, so they may never be mistaken for any other little boy's property, and to make a place for a new toy or two, though if you are wise you will not buy many playthings now, but will save them to send later, one by one, by parcel post, to be received with a joy it is a pity you cannot be there to see,

it will be so out of proportion to any other pleasure you could give by such simple means.

Of course, you must have some kodak pictures taken—ever so many of them—showing the family, the house, and the pets, as well as the boy himself. These are to be kept, too, to go in letters. They will be not only very precious possessions, but if they are labeled carefully they will be extremely useful in the classroom when your boy begins to learn to speak the names of the people at home.

Since they are to be used for this double purpose, be sure that each member of the family group is very distinctly marked, or the names of Aunt Mary and sister Helen may get hopelessly mixed in the boy's mind!

Finally, the last little garment and the last package is in the trunk, the last day is scratched off the calendar, and the boy himself is on the train. And now let me tell you something that you will not believe—that you will even resent, but which is perfectly true, and which I hope will comfort you a little when you

say good-by to the boy—and that is this: it really is very unusual for a little child from five to eight years old to be homesick at school. There are so many distractions, so many new and curious things to see, so many interesting things to do, and there are so many other children all friendly and all happy, that even if your boy cries when you leave him, the probabilities are high that before you reach the station he will be playing—shyly or uproariously, as temperament may decide—but certainly happily, with some new-found friend.

One of the most delightful things about a school for deaf children is the way all the other pupils welcome, pet, and look out for a newcomer. Every one makes much of him, and it would be hard indeed to be lonely long in the midst of so much attention and friendliness.

And now a word about letters.

Before you sent the boy to school I hope you didn't fail to teach him to recognize the written names of the different members of the family, so that he might be sure to understand

whom his first letters came from. And don't forget that he will be eager for letters! Too many mothers feel that it is useless to write to their children during their first year away from them. They are so sure that no word from them can be understood that they content themselves with sending inquiries to the proper authorities, and an occasional picture postcard to the children themselves, and fail to realize how soon their little boy or girl grasps the fact that the other children have real letters in envelopes, and that these come from home, or how sharp a disappointment it is when day after day goes by and brings them nothing.

If you could see, as I have seen, a letter, so worn that it was cracked on all its folds and dingy with much handling, carried day after day inside a little blouse, or guimpe, and put under the pillows every night, you would understand a little what those pieces of paper, covered with very imperfectly understood characters, but carrying love and remembrance from home, mean, even before the children can

read them. And very soon, if you are an observant mother, your child will really be able to read them.

For example, your boy's first letter may be something like this:

"DEAR MAMMA:
"I am well. I love you. HARRY."

When you answer it you might say, with the certainty that every word would be understood:

"DEAR HARRY:
"Mamma loves you. Papa is well. Mamma and Papa love you.
"Good-by. MAMMA."

Not a very satisfactory letter, do you say? Perhaps not to you, but most delightful and understandable to the little boy to whom it is written. And if a little later you follow it with another containing one of the kodak pictures of the cat, with "Tommy" written under it, accompanying such a note as this, not only your little boy, but his teacher will bless you:

"DEAR HARRY:

"Mamma is well. Papa is well. Mamma and Papa love you. Tommy loves you, too. Tommy is the cat. Tommy wants to see you.

"Good-by. MAMMA."

I have written these two notes not as models to be copied, but to show you how with a little thought and care you may ring the changes on almost every sentence that your boy learns; and make use of every new word, giving him a great deal of pleasure and helping to fix the phrases in his mind and to make him realize that they are really valuable additions to his means of communication. But I do not mean that you should confine your letters entirely to words and sentences that the child already knows. In fact, new expressions, if they are short and simple, and if the main part of your letter is made up of things the child understands at once, will add very much to the interest of your letter. He will be eager to know what the strange words mean, and the new

nouns, verbs, and adjectives will go immediately to swell his vocabulary.

Like any child just learning to talk, your little boy will at first use nouns, when later he will use pronouns, so in your earliest letters to him you will be surer of making yourself understood if you do the same. Probably, too, with the exception of two or three sentences like "I am well. I love you," you will notice that all his statements are written in the past tense, and that will be a guide to you to confine your own remarks to the past, for the most part, till you notice that he has begun to use the future and the present himself. Watch his letters carefully and adapt your own language forms to his.

There are two things that, as a general rule, I would advise you not to write about, and these are any illnesses in the family and—that supreme joy of school life—the box you are planning to send.

My reasons for this taboo are that even very little children are often made unhappy and

anxious, sometimes for days, if they know there is sickness at home, while in the second place boxes are so often delayed that they become the source of much disturbance of mind when the expressman fails to bring them.

I knew a little girl who watched every delivery for a week and cried after every one because the box her mother had promised her did not appear. So let illness and boxes go unmentioned till you can write something like this, "Papa was sick last week. He is well now. He goes to the office every day." And after the box has had time to reach its destination you can say, "Mamma sent a box to you Wednesday. She put two handkerchiefs, some new shoes, six oranges, and some money in the box. Papa gave the money to you."

If you are like most mothers, before many weeks have gone by you will be eager to visit your boy and see for yourself how he is getting on; whether he is really as happy as the letters from school assure you he is; what he is learning in class, and whether he has blankets

enough on his bed and sugar enough on his oatmeal.

But before the letter announcing the day of your arrival is posted or your ticket is bought, sit down by the fire and think the matter over.

You have confidence in the school, else you would never have sent your boy there; and you have been told repeatedly either that the little fellow is happy and well or, it may be, that he was rather homesick at first, but has now settled down to a very comfortable and contented state of mind and is doing well in class.

Now, if you go to see him too soon after he has left home there will really be a good deal more danger that the boy will be homesick after you leave him than there was when you took him to school in September, even if he has been quite happy up to the time of your visit.

In the first place, he will think, drawing his conclusions from visits that he may have made before, that school is over and that you have

come to take him home. So it will be a great surprise and shock when you go away without him. And in any case, after the separation of some weeks, his love for you will make him want to be with you, and he will really suffer when you say good-by.

So, if I were you, I would wait till after the Christmas holidays before going for my visit. By that time he will be fully settled in his new life and will look on it as an established part of existence. He will know from observation that other mothers come for a little while and then go home again without taking their children with them, and his advance in understanding will make it much easier to explain to him that your visit is temporary and will not make any radical change in his own life.

The delay will mean a good deal of self-sacrifice for you, but may very possibly save your boy from a sharp attack of homesickness, while later in the year this danger will usually have disappeared, and your visit will bring nothing but pleasure to you both and will help

to make school what you want it to be—a place where all sorts of delightful things are constantly sure to happen.

XXV

During the School Period

But the opportunities and obligations of the parents of deaf children to aid in their education by no means cease when the children enter school.

Throughout the entire period of school life, and even after their children leave school, the parents can be of very great assistance to them. During the time that the school is in session, if the child is away from home, the parents should write not less than once a week, and oftener if possible. These letters should contain all the little happenings at home, no matter how insignificant and uninteresting they may seem. If these things are expressed in simple language, using short sentences and common words, the letters will be one of the most efficient means of aiding the children to an ability to read, that the teacher possesses.

The child is full of eager curiosity to know the smallest details of the familiar home life. He will exert his mind more to dig out the meaning of the language of home letters than he will to understand a story in a reader. Miss Worcester has suggested one or two little letters that would do during the first half year at school. By the beginning of the second year it would be helpful if the letters read something like this:

"My Dear Boy:

"We got your nice letter. Thank you for it. We always like to know what you do at school. We like to know the names of your schoolmates. We are glad when you tell us about your books and your teachers. Mother, Tom, Jane and I are well. We talk about you often. We are glad you can go to school. A cat frightened the hens. The hens ran. The cat was naughty. I drove the cat away. I think the cat wanted to eat the little chickens.

"Tom hid behind the door. He jumped out quickly. He frightened Jane. She screamed. He laughed. Jane cried. Mother scolded Tom because he made Jane cry. Tom said Jane was a baby.

Jane said Tom was a bad boy. Then Jane laughed. She forgave Tom. Tom said he was sorry.

"We all love you.

"Good-by.

"Your loving
"FATHER."

Each year the letters can be a little more grown up and they should always be frequent.

XXVI

During Vacation

When vacation time comes and the children come home for the summer, the home folks will probably have some trouble at first in understanding their imperfect speech. Do not be discouraged. The speech will steadily improve from year to year, and you will soon be able to comprehend it, even when it is very faulty. But do not accept from the child anything except the best speech he is capable of. When the boy first arrives you will, probably, not know just how much to expect of him. To begin with, it will do him no harm to ask him to repeat what he says, even if you really did understand him the first time. He will probably speak much more distinctly the second time than he did the first, and you will see that you can demand of him more than you at first thought he could do. He will not be dis-

couraged by being asked to repeat. He is used to it. The price of good speech, like the price of liberty, is eternal vigilance. During the school period, teachers and parents should give unremitting attention to demanding of the children, *every time they speak,* the best enunciation of which they are at that time capable.

If you do not understand the boy, or he does not understand you, do not let him resort to gestures, nor use them yourself. Give him pencil and paper, if necessary. It will not be necessary often or long, and each day occasions of difficulty will grow fewer.

Provide some useful and helpful occupation for the child for at least a part of each day. Do not let him play at random all the time. Continue a certain regularity of life in the matter of meals and getting up and going to bed. Insist upon respectful behavior and good manners. He has these demanded of him at school. Do not let him return in the fall having lost much that he had gained during the preceding year.

When he is at home keep him in touch with the activities and the topics of discussion in the family circle. Do not let him withdraw or feel shut out. This will take a good deal of effort and self-denial and patience, but in the long run it will repay the parents. Failure to do this will eventually bring sorrow to all concerned. Train the other children to do their share of this. Insist upon their telling the deaf one their plans and their doings. Unless some care is taken he will see the others going without knowing where or why, he will sometimes lose pleasures because he did not hear the talk that was going on around him and no one thought to tell him. This has a tendency to make him bitter and unsocial.

From the very beginning of spoken intercourse with the deaf child the greatest care should be taken to speak NATURALLY to him. Avoid entirely all exaggeration of lip movement and mouth opening. Speak a little slowly, perhaps, and always distinctly, but never with facial contortions and waving hands. The

aim of his oral training is to enable him to understand the ordinary speech of people when they speak to him, and to do this he requires an immense amount of practice, just as the hearing child requires a great deal of practice for years before he can understand what people are saying to him. If you speak to him in a different way from that employed when speaking to others he will learn to understand that, but not your ordinary manner of speaking. He will also imitate it himself. The Chinaman speaks and understands only "Pidgin" English because only "Pidgin" English has been used in communicating with him. If people had spoken to the Chinaman as they do to other people he would have gradually acquired good English.

So it is with the deaf child. If you want him to gradually learn to understand the ordinary intercourse of life, you must exercise him in it for years. You must not expect him to get much at first, any more than you expect the baby to understand to start with. But

each month he will gain more, and by the time he is sixteen or seventeen he will have very nearly overtaken his hearing brother. But if you always address him with a yawning mouth and flopping tongue and lips, and use deaf-mute English to him, he will progress in his understanding and use of that, but it is not what you wish him to acquire. Be patient, be gentle, be untiring and unremitting in your efforts, but BE NATURAL. *Keep your eyes on his eyes and speak only when his gaze is upon your face.*

Before closing I ought to say that (more is the pity) there are many persons who live by trading upon the ignorance and credulity of the unfortunate. The deaf and the friends of the deaf fall an easy prey to the advertisements of quack remedies, ear drums, etc., that are always useless and sometimes actually dangerous. The American Medical Association has had the courage to issue a pamphlet in which these fake cures are described and ex-

posed, and every deaf person, and parent of a deaf child, should have one of these pamphlets. The title is "Deafness Cure Fakes," and can be obtained by writing to the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Any one who has read these pages will easily see that the suggestions are all aimed to secure for the deaf a treatment similar in kind, though somewhat different in degree, to that accorded the normal hearing person. The tendency has been to differentiate the deaf too much from the hearing. By adopting the procedure of pure oralism, effectively applied under *real oral conditions,* uncontaminated, during the educational period from five to twenty years of age, by finger spelling or signs, the deaf will be far more fully restored to a normal position in the social and industrial world than they can ever be by the silent methods at present so largely used during their most impressionable years.

XXVII

SOME NOTS

Do not be downcast.

Deafness does not, necessarily, bring dumbness.

Do not consider the deaf child as different from other children.

Do not cease talking to him.

Do not speak with exaggerated facial movements.

Do not exempt him from the duties and tasks and obedience properly demanded of all children.

Do not let him grow selfish.

Do not let him grow indifferent.

Do not be in haste.

Do not show impatience.

MAR 2 1915